

the bottom edge of the carrier to the back frame. This arrangement, along with the attachment of the carrier at its upper corners to the frame supports 102, provides the comfort resulting from the bendable carrier. Gregory does not teach or suggest that the bottom edge of the frame 30 itself is attached to the frame 16. Rather, Gregory's frame 30 is connected by connectors 31 to the frame 16 (and not directly attached), and the connection is along the side edges of the frame 30 (and not the bottom edge) as is clearly shown in Figs. 1 and 4 of Gregory. Thus, the limitation of amended claim 1 is not met by Gregory.

The Examiner has also stated that the frame 30 of Gregory "is also configured to be secured along two upper corners to top portions of the chair back frame (50) via connectors (31) as seen in Fig. 4." Claim 1 of the subject application includes the further limitation that the carrier is configured "directly attached. . .at two upper corners to another portion of said chair back frame." Referring to Figs. 1, 4 and 5 of Gregory, it is clear that there is not anything at all directly attached at the two upper corners of the frame 30. Thus, this limitation found in amended claim 1 is not met by Gregory.

Claim 9 includes the further limitations that the chair back frame "includes a transverse member and said carrier is attached along its bottom edge to said transverse member." Gregory discloses transverse members on frame 16 only at the top and at the bottom. The bottom edge of the frame 30 of Gregory does not appear to be directly attached to either of the top or the bottom transverse members of the frame 16. Once again, the limitation found in applicants' amended claim is not found in Gregory.

With regard to applicants' claim 11, the Examiner states that "Gregory discloses a back for a chair comprising a fabric panel (28) and a bendable carrier (30)." This rejection is traversed. Gregory does not teach or suggest a bendable frame 30. The contrary is suggested.

Gregory does not disclose directly what the material of frame 30 is, but upon viewing Fig. 4, the frame appears to be of the same material and geometry as seat frame 42, and the seat frame 42 is specifically described as being made of aluminum extrusion (col. 2, line 57). It is not likely that this aluminum extrusion is bendable in view of the strong and stiff cross section design which is shown in Figs. 6, 7 and 8 of Gregory. Aluminum typically is not bendable except in very long pieces or in sheet form.

Claim 11 of the subject application includes the limitation of "flexible joint means at opposed upper corners of said carrier." This rejection is respectfully traversed. Referring to Figs. 1, 2, 4, 5 of Gregory, it is apparent that there are no joint means at opposed upper corners of the frame 30. Hence, Gregory does not include this limitation of applicants' claim 11.

Claims 2, 8, 12, 13 and 14 have been rejected under section 103 as being unpatentable over Gregory in view of Pile, U.S. 3,008,764. These rejections are respectfully traversed. The limitations found in applicants' claim 1 that are not taught or suggested by Gregory have already been explained above. Hence, even if combined, Gregory and Pile do not teach or suggest all of the limitations of the rejected claims.

In addition, claim 2 includes a limitation that "two upper corners of said carrier are each configured with an aperture." Neither Gregory nor Pile disclose this limitation or even suggest it. In both Gregory and Pile the two upper corners of their chair backs do not engage a back frame and have no apertures.

Claim 8 includes a limitation of "at least one retainer...secured to said carrier to form a socket." Neither Gregory nor Pile disclose this limitation.

Claims 12, 13 and 14 include similar limitations as applicants' claims 2 and 8. Once again, neither Gregory nor Pile teach or suggest the limitations.

Claims 7 and 18 stand rejected under section 103 as being unpatentable over Gregory in view of Stumpf et al., U.S. 6,059,368. These rejections are respectfully traversed. Since claims 7 and 18 are dependent from claims 1 or 11, the comments made above regarding the differences between the cited references and the limitations found in claims 1 and 11 apply to claims 7 and 18.

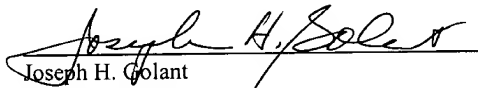
Claims 4, 5 and 16 are rejected under section 103 as being unpatentable over Gregory in view of Stumpf et al., U.S. 6,035,901. These rejections are respectfully traversed. Claims 4, 5 and 16 are dependent from claims 1 or 11, therefore, the comments made above regarding claims 1 and 11 apply equally to claims 4, 5 and 16.

Claim 10 is rejected under section 103 as being unpatentable over Gregory in view of Knoblock, U.S. 5,725, 277. This rejection is respectfully traversed. Since claim 10 is dependent from claim 1, the comments made above regarding claims 1 apply to claim 10.

The Examiner is respectfully requested to consider all claims now in the application and indicate allowance.

Dated: March 19, 2003

Respectfully submitted,

  
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Attorney Docket No. 087522785155

Confirmation No.: 9254

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5. (Original) The back of claim 3 wherein said fabric includes woven multifilaments and monofilaments.

6. (Original) The back of claim 1 wherein said carrier is a two piece structure and edges of said fabric are clamped between said two pieces.

7. (Original) The back of claim 6 wherein glue is provided to retain said fabric edges in said carrier.

8. (Original) The back of claim 2 wherein at least one retainer is secured to said carrier to form a socket for retaining each of said balls.

B2 9. (Currently Amended) The back of claim 1 wherein said chair back frame includes a transverse member and said carrier is attached ~~secured~~ along its bottom edge to said transverse member.

10. (Currently Amended) The back of claim 9 wherein said carrier is attached ~~secured~~ to said transverse member by screws.

① 11. (Currently Amended) A back for a chair comprising:  
a fabric panel;  
a bendable carrier extending around the periphery of and fastened to edges of the fabric panel, said carrier being configured to be fastened along a bottom edge to a first frame member of said chair; and

flexible joint means at opposed upper corners of said carrier;  
said joint means being configured to be connectable to upper portions of second frame members;

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wherein said flexible joint means and said bendable carrier allow said fabric panel to flex as a chair user reclines against said fabric panel to thereby distribute forces against the user's back.

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12. (Original) The back of claim 11 wherein said flexible joint means are sockets configured to receive a spherical member of said second frame members.

13. (Original) The back of claim 12 wherein said sockets are formed by apertures in said carrier.

14. (Original) The back of claim 13 including retainers disposed on each side of said apertures to form said sockets.

15. (Original) The back of claim 11 wherein said fabric is of open mesh construction.

16. (Original) The back of claim 15 wherein said fabric includes woven multifilaments and monofilaments.

17. (Original) The back of claim 11 wherein said carrier is a two piece structure and edges of said fabric are clamped between said two pieces.

18. (Original) The back of claim 17 wherein glue is provided to retain said fabric edges in said carrier.

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19. (New) A back for a chair comprising:  
a fabric panel; and  
a carrier extending around the periphery of and fastened to edges of the fabric panel, said carrier having opposed upper corners;  
said carrier configured to be secured at said upper corners to two generally vertically extending supports of a chair back frame.

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20. (New) A back for a chair comprising:

a fabric panel; and

a carrier extending around the periphery of and fastened to edges of the fabric panel, said carrier having a bottom edge;

said carrier configured to be directly attached along substantially the entire bottom edge to a chair back frame.

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